



Now Hear This!

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General or Scholarship)

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Association Founded 1947

By Otto and Trudy Schwarz

A Weekend in Houston to Remember



Photo by Muhamad Alamsyah

In attendance at the 2026 Memorial Service: (L to R): Suri Ishak, Consul for Information, Social, and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in Houston, Texas; Kolonel Laut Yudi Adrian, Naval Attaché from the Embassy of Indonesia in Washington, D.C.; H. E. Indroyono Soesilo, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the U.S.A. from the Embassy of Indonesia in Washington, D.C.; Association Executive Director John K. Schwarz; and Ourina Ritonga, Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia in Houston, Texas.

The 2026 Day of Remembrance

Association members, families, friends, and participants were among the 2026 "Day of Remembrance" (DOR) attendees who gathered in Houston at the Doubletree Hotel and Suites, Houston Galleria on March 6-7 to mark the 84th anniversary of the loss of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* (D-29) at the WWII Battle of Sunda Strait.

(continued on the next page)

In This Issue...

- ◆ Day of Remembrance/ 1-6
- ◆ 2026 DOR Snapshots/ 7-9
- ◆ Executive Director's Report/ 10
- ◆ 2026 Scholarship Recipient/ 11
- ◆ Men Who Didn't Survive/ 12
- ◆ CA-30 Merchandise/ 13
- ◆ Board of Managers/ 14
- ◆ Communication Channels/ 14
- ◆ Thanks to Donors/ 15
- ◆ Financial Report/ 15

The DOR began on Friday, March 6, as DOR attendees boarded a bus, generously provided by the Harris County Precinct Three Transportation Department, and departed our hotel at 1:30 p.m. to tour the new Houston Maritime Center and Museum facility in Houston. Among the museum's various displays, which attendees visited, was a floor-to-ceiling photo of *Houston* going through the Panama Canal in the 1930s (pictured at right).



During the tour, we discovered that **Bob Ivy's** impressive *USS Houston* (CA-30) model was being refurbished as a result of some damage it unfortunately received during the recent move to the new facility.

Standing next to the large photo of *USS Houston* (CA-30) at the Houston Maritime Museum (L to R): Linda Swick and Kathy Reilly, daughters of *USS Houston* (CA-30) survivor John D. Reilly and Teresa Reilly; Teresa Reilly, widow of John D. Reilly; and Michael Reilly, son of John D. Reilly and Teresa Reilly. (Photo by Dennis Flynn).



Among the museum attendees was retired RADM Samuel J. Cox, Curator of the U.S. Navy and Director of the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) who took a picture of the model (Photo at left by Dana Charles).

At the Friday night banquet at our hotel's "meeting room," Association member and Historian Blane Amphor delivered an excellent PowerPoint show, "The End of World War II: The Untold Story of the Surrender of Japan."



Banquet guests included (pictured below, L to R): **Kolonel Laut Yudi Adrian**, Naval Attaché from the Embassy of Indonesia, Washington, D.C.; **RADM Samuel J. Cox, USN (Retired)**; **H. E. Indroyono Soesilo**, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to

Blane Amphor delivering his PowerPoint show on Friday evening. (Photo by Dennis Flynn).



the United States; **NG Dennis Flynn**, association photographer and son of the late *USS Houston* (CA-30) survivor **David C. Flynn**; and **Pangeran Ibrani**, Minister Counsellor for Economic Affairs from the Embassy of Indonesia, Washington, D.C. (Other distinguished guests not pictured, included): **Suri Ishak**, Consul for Information, Social and Cultural Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, Washington, D.C.; and **Muhamad Alamsyah**, Staff for Information, Social, and Cultural Affairs in Houston, Texas.



Retired RADM Cox speaking at the Friday evening dinner.

Wearing a USS *Houston* (CA-30) Polo shirt, **retired RADM Samuel J. Cox, USN** spoke following dinner about the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington, D.C. Then, **Ambassador H. E. Indryono Soesilo** surprised and delighted us with the showing of a new video featuring the February 28, 2026 commemoration ceremony held aboard an Indonesian ship near Sunda Strait over the remains of USS *Houston* (CA-30).

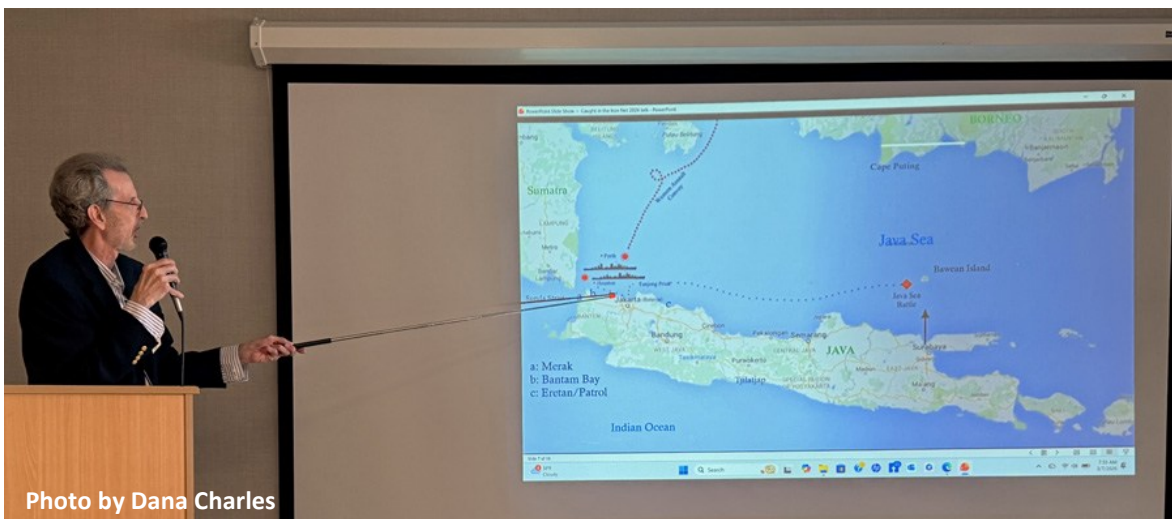


Ambassador Soesilo speaking at the Friday evening dinner.



Kolonel Laut Yudi Adrian, Indonesian Naval Attaché (pictured above), showing a video taken during a recent dive near Sunda Strait on the coral-covered remains of USS *Houston* (CA-30).

On Saturday morning, March 7, we gathered at 9:00 a.m. for breakfast at our hotel's "USS *Houston* CA-30 meeting room" where our Association's Historian, **Donald M. Kehn, Jr.** (pictured below), delivered his expertly researched PowerPoint presentation, "Caught in the Iron Net—Little-known Facts About the Battle of Sunda Strait." At 12:30 p.m., buses departed the hotel for the 2026 USS *Houston* CA-30 annual Memorial Service that began at 1:30 p.m. at the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument site in downtown Houston.



The 2026 USS Houston (CA-30) Memorial Service

By Dana Charles



Photo by Muhamad Alamsyah

Approximately 150 people attended the 2026 USS *Houston* (CA-30) Annual Memorial Service held at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, 2026, at the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument. Our Association's executive director, **John K. Schwarz**, son of our Association's co-founders, **Otto C. Schwarz** and **Trudy Schwarz**, again served as MC this year. **The Reverend Dr. James T. Payne** of the Reformed

Episcopal Church presented the Invocation. **Mila Gates**, Apprentice Cadet, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and **Matt Rejmaniak**, Cousin of U.S.S. *Houston* (CA-30) crewman **Edwin Dombrowski**, led us in singing the National Anthem. Association vice president **Dana Charles**, son of the late **H. Robert Charles** of USS *Houston* (CA-30)'s Marine Detachment, then welcomed and recognized our guests.

LaShondra C. Jones, Ph.D. of the Office of Veterans and Military Affairs, Mayor's Office, the City of Houston, and **Willie Davis**, U.S. Army veteran and City Council Member At-large, District 2, provided a welcome by the City of Houston. Mr. Davis presented the Association with a special City Proclamation, which two widows of USS *Houston* (CA-30) Survivors in attendance, **Donna Mae Flynn** (widow of **David C. Flynn**) and **Teresa Reilly**, (widow of **John D. Reilly**) gratefully accepted. (Photo at right).



Photo by Dennis Flynn

Speakers representing the WWII nations of the American-British-Dutch-Australian Command (ABDA) included: **Drew Danier**, Deputy Consul-General of Australia, Houston, Texas; **Commander Rachel Atherford, RAN (05)**, Assistant Naval Attaché, Embassy of Australia, Washington, D.C.; **Commander David Brannighan, Royal Navy**, Assistant Naval Attaché, British Embassy, Washington, D.C.; **Aura Cuellar**, Honorary Consul of the Netherlands in Houston and **Commander S.A.M. (Simon) Gunneweg, Royal Netherlands Navy**, Deputy Defense Cooperation Attaché, Assistant Naval Attaché, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Washington, D.C.; **Retired RADM Samuel J. Cox, USN**, the Curator of the U.S. Navy and Director of the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command; and **Gunnery Sergeant Audrea Killalea, U.S. Marine Corps (retired)**. We were also honored to hear remarks from **H. E. Indroyono Soesilo**, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to the United States from the Embassy of Indonesia in Washington, D.C.

Association president **Sue Kreutzer** (photo at left) then presented a special Association award to **Commander Jim Sterling, USN (Retired)**. Sterling, an original member of the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Foundation which, in 1995, built and dedicated the USS *Houston* (CA-30) Monument, was recognized for his loyal participation in every annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service since the first one in 1995—13 consecutive services.



Photo by Dennis Flynn

2026 USS Houston (CA-30) Annual Memorial Service Speakers



Reverend Dr. James T. Payne
Reformed Episcopal Church



LaShondra C. Jones, PhD.
Office of Veterans and Military Affairs
City of Houston, TX



Willie Davis
U.S. Army veteran and City Council
Member-At-Large, District 2, Houston, TX



(L to R): Commander Rachel Atherfold, RAN (05), Assistant Naval Attaché, Embassy of Australia, Washington, D.C. ; Commander S.A.M. (Simon) Gunneweg, Royal Netherlands Navy, Deputy Defense Cooperation Attaché, Assistant Naval Attaché, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Washington, D.C.; and Commander David Brannigan, Royal Navy, Staff Officer, Submarines, British Embassy, Washington, D.C.



Rear Admiral Samuel J. Cox, USN (retired)
Director, Naval History and Heritage Command,
Washington, D.C.



Gunnery Sergeant Audrea Killalea,
U.S. Marine Corps (Retired),
Representing the SGT Mary Gonzalez
Department of the Marine Corps League

H.E. Indroyono Soesilo,
Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia
to the United States, from the Embassy of
Indonesia in Washington, D.C.



Photos by Dennis Flynn

Association vice president **Dana Charles** then recited “The Navy Hymn” lyrics as **The Community Band of Southeast Texas** performed the music. **The McLemore Detachment #4, Marine Corps League** provided the Rifle Salute. **Brayden Wehring**, Ship's Leading Petty Officer, U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, rang Eight Bells. (See picture at right). **The Community Band of Southeast Texas** beautifully provided Taps. **Matt Rejmaniak** led us in singing “God Bless America,” accompanied by **The Community Band of Southeast Texas**, and **The Reverend Dr. James T. Payne** delivered the Benediction.



Photo by Dennis Flynn



Photo by Dennis Flynn

Brian Cosgrove from the Houston Maritime Center and Museum presenting a wreath during the wreath-laying ceremony.

At 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, 2026 DOR attendees gathered for dinner at our hotel. After dinner, **Dana Charles** presented a PowerPoint show, called “Lest We Forget,” featuring pictures from our Association’s collection of photos of USS *Houston* (CA-30) crewmen. Among the crewmen appearing in the pictures were several who were Killed in Action during the Battle of Sunda Strait, and some who survived the sinking, but perished later as POWS. We greatly appreciate Association Historian **Don Kehn, Jr.**, who helped identify USS *Houston* (CA-30) survivors that appeared in some of the photos.

Many thanks to all who attended and participated in DOR 2026! We have already begun planning next year’s “Day of Remembrance” gathering, which will be held in Houston, Texas in early March 2027.

See you there!

We deeply appreciate all participants who laid wreaths at the base of the Monument during our wreath-laying ceremony, and we thank the **U.S. Naval Sea Cadets** who helped tremendously throughout the memorial service. We also thank the City of Houston and The Heritage Society for graciously supporting the annual USS *Houston* (CA-30) Memorial Service. The wonderful **Gideon family**, which had provided refreshments at the annual Memorial Service site for many years, has now retired and, sadly, was not with us this year. We thank them for their past, unselfish service to us.



Photo by Blane Amphor

2026 DOR Snapshots By Dennis Flynn



Photo by Dana Charles



Photos by Dennis Flynn



Photos by Dennis Flynn



Photo by Muhamad Alamsyah



Photo by Muhamad Alamsyah



Photos by Dennis Flynn



*From the desk of the Executive Director
John K. Schwarz*

For those who could not join us at this year's 31st consecutive Memorial Service within the two-day, Day of Remembrance (DOR) gathering in honor of the men of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and HMAS *Perth* I, we bring it to you in this edition of the [Blue Bonnet](#). To all the other folks that make this service what it is, including the Band, the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets, the Marines, the Speakers, our friends from the city of Houston and the many wreath presenters, we greatly thank all of you for a job so well done! It was a truly wonderful experience to see this service conducted as well as it was.

We plan the DOR year-round. Yet there are always a few last-minute challenges. This year was no exception. The band's tent and the chairs are set up in Sam Houston Park on Friday before the Memorial Service. We also raise our five flags to signal that an event is about to take place. On Friday afternoon, March 6, we found there was damage to one of our flagpole ropes. It literally shredded and fell from the top of the flagpole as we started raising the flag—"Houston, we have a problem!" It was the afternoon on the last day of a workweek. Who might be available to fix the flagpole? After failing to connect with our City of Houston contact, Sue fortunately reached Mr. Thomas McWhorter. As you may recall, he is the terrific project manager who oversaw the site restoration in 2023 after a driver plowed into some of the monument's surrounding items, including a bench and two flagpoles. Within minutes of Sue's call, Thomas assembled a dedicated crew of Houston city workers. They arrived with replacement rope, clips, and a truck with a cherry picker, as well as a can-do attitude — all the necessary components for re-rigging the flagpole. Bravo and thank you to Thomas and the City of Houston crew for resolving our flag crisis!



Photo by Sue Kreutzer

In this edition of the [Blue Bonnet](#), you will see an article entitled "Stories of the Men Who Didn't Survive," about a very important endeavor. Association member Blane Amphor, works as a docent at the 'Marshall House' in Leesburg, VA, along with, at one time, Mr. Tom Bowers, a former military officer who served during the Vietnam era. Bowers currently volunteers with "Stories Behind the Stars (SBTS)," an organization dedicated to writing the stories of all Americans killed in WWII. Blane, having become intimately familiar with the story of USS *Houston* (CA-30) and the many men lost aboard her, spoke to Tom about *Houston* and encouraged him to write about our men, leading to Tom's decision to do so. Tom's work will include all those crewmen from the CA-30 who were either 'killed in action' (KIA) or who perished in POW captivity. We so appreciate Mr. Bowers efforts already underway, which will result in a comprehensive list and write-up of all USS *Houston* (CA-30) crewmen who made the ultimate sacrifice.

In other news, the Scholarship Committee has decided that accredited trade school attendance prepares students for a substantial career path; and therefore, it should qualify a prospective trade school student to compete for our Association's scholarship. The application for the scholarship is available here: [Appl09.pdf](#) Applications are accepted beginning June 1 with the deadline for submission extending to November 1. Stay well everyone!

MEET OUR 2026 U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY “USS HOUSTON (CA-30) MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP” RECIPIENT



BROOKE PERSON

We are pleased to announce Brooke Person as our 11th 'USS Houston CA-30 Memorial Scholarship' designee from the U.S. Naval Academy Foundation in Annapolis, MD. This the scholarship designating every other year, in honor of the men of the USS *Houston* CA-30, obtained back in 2008 through the generosity of our members. This scholarship, which funds a preparatory year at a designated military-oriented institution in America prior to becoming a plebe (first year) at the U.S. Naval Academy. Brooke attended the Northwestern Preparatory School in Crestline, California. Northwestern Preparatory School is a post-high school graduate preparatory school designed to prepare young men and women who aspire to attend United States military academies.

Both of Brooke's parents are U. S. Naval Academy graduates, dad Chris in 1998 and mom Deidre in 1999. In her letter of thanks to the USS Houston (CA-30) Survivor's Association and Next Generations®, she shared with us what she derived from this valuable year of preparation, which was enabled by the scholarship. Here are some of her shared thoughts:

“My experiences at Northwestern Preparatory School were like no other. It was at this school that I made lifelong friends who will also be attending the Naval Academy with me. I was pushed in all aspects, making me physically and mentally tougher and stronger. I also learned to overcome hardships and adapt to change. My preparatory school was evacuated for a few weeks due to the Southern California fires, and we were sent home to do Zoom school. This unexpected turn of events was overwhelming, but I was able to overcome this challenge with the help and solidarity of my classmates. I was also held to high academic expectations, and I had to learn to get over my fear of asking for help. In doing this I was able to excel in my academics like never before, which I believe will be integral to my success at the Naval Academy. I believe that this year of preparation has transformed me into a more confident young woman, which is all thanks to your generosity. Without this extra year of preparation, I can confidently say that I would have had a much harder time adjusting to the demands of the Naval Academy. I am so grateful for this opportunity to improve myself over the past year, and it could not have been possible without the support of your Association!”

We certainly wish Brooke the best of success and hope that she becomes yet another Military Officer our “USS Houston CA-30 Memorial Scholarship” has helped. To date, our scholarship has realized 7 Military Officers (6 - Navy, 1 - Marine).

John K. Schwarz, Chairman, the Scholarship Committee



Stories of the Men Who Didn't Survive

By Tom Bowers

I am affiliated with [Stories Behind the Stars](#), an organization of volunteers devoted to writing a story about each of the more than 420,000 Americans who died in World War II, including 877 from USS *Houston* (CA-30).

I gather facts from familiar genealogical sources, including *Findagrave.com*, *Ancestry.com*, *Fold3.com*, and *Newspapers.com* to write a story that resembles an obituary. I post that story, with a memorial post, to *Togetherweserved.com*. You can see what one looks like—the story of *Houston* Fireman First Class Leo Carmelo Abate at [Leo Carmelo](#).

You can find stories of other World War II fallen by going to [Together We Served](#), selecting the branch of service and then **Fallen Soldiers**, and entering the person's last name and first name. If a story has been written about them, you will be directed to that story. Eventually, you will be able to use a smartphone app, take a picture of a gravestone and see the story.

I am about to embark on a project of writing about the men who died on *Houston* or in a prisoner-of-war camp. (I recently completed stories about 560 men who died on USS *Indianapolis*, (CA-35). I will work alphabetically through a list of the 877 who died on *Houston*. Based on my experience with *Indianapolis*, I estimate that it will take more than a year to complete the *Houston* list. Stories will be available as I complete them, through your own search or by a link on your association's website.

Please contact me at tombowers42@gmail.com if you have information about someone who died on *Houston* or in a POW camp—or if you would like me to “skip the line” and write a story about him.

I also hope that you will consider becoming a volunteer for Stories Behind the Stars and write stories yourself. I have found it to be an incredibly rewarding and inspiring experience. You can learn more by going to the organization's website.

Now See This!

USS *Houston* (CA-30) Merchandise! Wear with pride!

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- USS *Houston* CA-30 Challenge Coins – (\$10.00 ea.)
- USS *Houston* CA-30 Hats – (\$25.00 ea.)
- USS *Houston* CA-30 Polos Shirts— Limited sizes & quantity in Black and Navy Blue – (\$24.00 ea.)
- USS *Houston* CA-30 T-Shirts - Navy Blue — (\$18.00 ea.) **NEW!**

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(All Items: Plus Shipping)

USS *Houston* CA-30 Challenge Coin



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USS *Houston* CA-30 T-Shirts

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...here to serve you!*



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Son of USN survivor Otto Schwarz and Trudy Schwarz
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Email: John@usshouston.org



President: Sue Kreutzer
Daughter of USN survivor Paul Papish
Webmaster, archives, membership,
Scholarship Committee
Email: Sue@usshouston.org



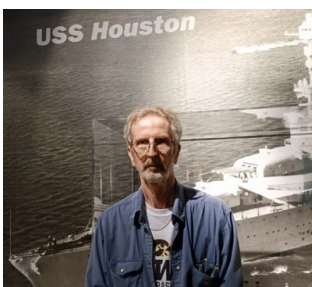
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Our Association's Historian, Donald M. Kehn, Jr. is the author of two U.S. Naval History books: [A Blue Sea of Blood](#) and [In the Highest Degree Tragic](#).



[Blue Bonnet](#) Staff Photographer:
Dennis Flynn,
Son of USN Survivor David C. Flynn.

Membership

Our Association continues to grow as more folks reach us—through such avenues as our websites—and want to know more about the *Houston*, or just simply seek to contribute to the perpetuation of the memory of this gallant warship. To those interested in taking it further and joining our Association: go to www.usshouston.org, click on the “news tab,” scroll to the bottom and review the Association’s bylaws, then click on the link to membership form (<http://www.usshouston.org/memberform.pdf>). After filling out the form, send it in as directed on the form. Our Association is funded through voluntary donations rather than mandatory annual dues. To make a donation, please refer to page one of this newsletter, or review the instructions on the “news tab” of our website.

Association Communication Channels

- Association information, including current and archived newsletter editions, is available at the Association's official website: www.usshouston.org.
- All email correspondence for the Association is directed through: contact@usshouston.org
- The Association’s regular mailing address and phone number is listed on the first page of each issue of the [Blue Bonnet](#) newsletter.
- Our Association's only social media presence is on Facebook at: **USS Houston CA-30**.

* The Board of Managers is available to members for questions, concerns, input, or to clarify any matter regarding the Association via email contact@usshouston.org, phone, or regular mail.

Thank you!

Donations

In Memory of Robert I. Martin & M. B. Smiley
Kent and Nancy Bettisworth

In Memory of David Flynn, Eugene Crispi,
John Reilly and Trudy Schwarz
Donna Flynn

In Memory of David Flynn and Cletus Flynn
Fulton and Ellen Flynn

In Memory of Joseph Hoyt Whaley
Tony Whaley

Other Donations

Bernice Harapat
Joe and Melisse Kollmyer
Michael and Jo Marie Reilly
John Schwarz
John Signorin
Linda and Charles Swick

Financial Report

January 1, to March 18, 2026

General Fund

Beginning Balance	\$37,846.73
Receipts	\$8,525.50
Expenses	-\$5,841.28
Ending Balance	\$40,530.95



Scholarship Fund

Beginning Balance	\$29,975.83
Receipts	\$2,080.47
Expenses	\$0.00
Ending Balance	\$32,056.30



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All submitted articles are subject to editing.

Views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of this Association, its members, or its Board of Managers.



At the 2026 Memorial Service: Two retired Marine Master Gunnery Sergeants and their spouses. (L to R): Teresa Holley, great niece of USS *Houston* (CA-30) survivor George W. Donohou and MGSgt Chris Holley, USMC (Retired) and Michelle and MGSgt Steve Cutrer, USMC (Retired), grandson of USS *Houston* (CA-30) survivor William Weissinger.